CLAIMS

1.   A user interface for guiding a user through a sequential task requiring user interaction in a plurality of ordered steps, the user interface including a window on a computer screen comprising:

a first pane displaying an active roadmap of two or more of the ordered steps and for indicating a selected one of the two or more sequential steps;

a second pane for providing a user interface pattern, the user interface pattern corresponding to the selected one of the two or more sequential steps; and

a third pane for displaying one or more activities related to activities displayed in the user interface pattern.

2.   The user interface of claim 1, wherein the user interface pattern is a form.

3.   The user interface of claim 2, wherein the second·pane is also for receiving user input into the form.

4.   The user interface of claim 1, wherein the first pane is also for receiving a user selection of one of the two or more sequential steps.

5.   The user interface of claim 1, wherein the third pane is also for receiving a user selection of one of the one or more related actions.

6.   The user interface of claim 5, wherein the user interface initiates the associated secondary, related task upon receiving the user selection of one of the one or more related actions.

7.   The user interface of claim 1, wherein the one or more related actions displayed is based on the indicated sequential step from the first pane.

8.   The user interface of claim 1, further comprising a fourth pane displaying explanatory text.

9.   The user interface of claim 8, wherein the explanatory text displayed is based on the indicated sequential step from the first pane.

10.   The user interface of claim 1, further comprising a fifth pane displaying core functions.

11.   The user interface of claim 10, wherein the core function displayed is based on the indicated sequential step from the first pane.

12.   The user interface of claim 10, wherein one of the core functions is a command to proceed to the next sequential step.

13.   The user interface of claim 10, wherein, upon receipt of the next sequential step command from the user in the fifth pane, the first pane indicates the next sequential step.

14.   A method of guiding a user through a sequential task requiring user interaction in a plurality of ordered steps, comprising:

        displaying an active roadmap of two or more of the ordered steps in a first pane;

        indicating a selected one of the two or more sequential steps;

        providing a user interface pattern in a second pane, the user interface pattern corresponding to the selected one of the two or more sequential steps; and

        displaying in a third pane one or more activities related to activities displayed in the user interface pattern.

15.   The method of claim 14, wherein the user interface pattern is a form.

16.   The method of claim 15, further comprising receiving user input into the form.

17.   The method of claim 14, further comprising receiving a user selection of one of the two or more sequential steps.

18.   The method of claim 14, further comprising receiving a user selection of one of the one or more related actions.

19.   The method of claim 18, further comprising initiating the associated secondary, related task upon receiving the user selection of one of the one or more related actions.

20.   The method of claim 14, further comprising displaying the one or more related actions based on the indicated sequential step.

21.   The method of claim 14, further comprising displaying explanatory text.

22.   The method of claim 21, further comprising displaying the explanatory text based on the indicated sequential step.

23.   The method of claim 14, further comprising displaying core functions.

24.   The method of claim 23, further comprising displaying the core function based on the indicated sequential step from the first pane.